

# THE YANKEE

Drawings by Walter Bigg

BY HAPSBURG LIEBE

**Y**OU axed me about moonshiners in the wild Pine Gap Section awhile ago, and I didn't say nothin' 'cept that the' wasn't none in thar. I wanted to wait till after supper, when we could git out here whar we could talk better, to tell you why the' hain't none. The start of it was a man's love for huckleberry pies. He was from some 'eres up around Boston, and the first job he struck down here was a place as a revenue—

which place wasn't hard to git on account o' the danger hooked up to it. And if all Yankees love pies like he did—well, they shore love pies!

He was a young feller, about twenty-three, tall and strong and fine lookin', with the twinklin' gray eyes in the world and a smile that stayed with him even when he was mad. He always did remind me of jest a great, big boy. But he was really a man, much of a man, and in more ways 'n one; he would fight a high-speed log saw if he thought it was right, or he would git down from his hoss to help a junebug offen its back. His name was Charles Matthew Brading; but he made us call him Matt, because he said it seemed like every hoss in the State answered to the name of Charley.

"Not that I'm any too good," he'd say, "I was a thinkin' of the hosses." And then he'd throw back his head and jest kee-haw.

Granny Carter was a longtime widder who lived in a little cabin down clost to the edge of the mountains. She had four grown and unmarried sons, who was as much alike, in size and looks, as the four fingers on one o' yore hands; and she had brought them thar four boys up with as much keer as any mother ever took with children. At first she didn't have no more use for Matt Brading than a mule has for a side pocket. She didn't skeer up a hate for him on account o' him a bein' a revenue; she didn't like the stillin' business, and hadn't never liked it. She jest didn't take to Matt because she thought he was some sort o' furriner.

**O**NE day Brading, hot and tired, rode up to the gate afore her little cabin and axed her for goodness' sake to give him somethin' to eat, a tellin' her that he was about to starve.

"Shore," she says, "if you can stand to eat sech as I've got."

Now, hain't it funny how a woman likes to give a hungry man somethin' to eat? Matt he lit offen that thar hoss and hitched it to a fencepost, and then follered Granny Carter into the house, which was as clean as yore please, with all the old cracked dishes polished and a shinin', and with a floor that you could a dragged a white b'iled shirt across without dirtyin' it. She set him down to a table covered with a red-flowered oilcloth, and begun to bring things from the springhouse,—milk and butter and things. He told her not to go to no trouble for sech a triflin' beggar as him; but she was hotfoot for tryin' some pepper-cured and acorn-fatted ham and makin' some strong coffee, which she done.

But Matt didn't pay much attention to the ham. He set thar with them gray eyes o' hisn a twinklin' at a pair o' huckleberry pies at the totther end o' the table. And the old woman seen it.

"Do you eat pie first?" she axes him, not shore whether she understands jest how furriners eats.

"I don't gen'rally," says Matt Brading; "but them thar pies looks so much like home, with their scalloped edges, and the little pinky places whar the juice has soaked through. If it's all the same to you," he tells her right bashful, "I want to make a dinner on one o' them pies."

So he got it. He told me afterwards that it was one of his own mother's pies straight up and down—and I be durned if he didn't mighty nigh lose that smile o' hisn for a whole minute, by gyal!

Of course Granny Carter was somethin' of a talker, wunst she seen that Matt wasn't a thing of horns and split hoofs.

"Are you a findin' any moonshiners?" she axes him as he eats his pie.

"I'm sorry to say that we hain't," says Matt, as honest as could be. "They've give us a heap o' trouble up in Pine Gap too. The's a bunch up thar that we don't seem to git a line on. They don't fight us; they jest keep out o' the way, and we can't find 'em."

"I hope you git 'em," says Granny Carter—and Matt was shore surprised. "I don't like the whisky business," she goes on, "because it causes a lot o' trouble."

Now, the gov'ment was a little hard on the revenue, because they hadn't had no luck with takin' the law-breakers in Pine Gap. Matt was in charge, on account o' the boss revenue a bein' on the sick list. He was a don't his best; but the gov'ment didn't look at nothin' but results. Matt seen a chance to try a different course at huntin' the Pine Gap men.

"Mis' Carter," says he, "it hain't right to violate the law, and if you know whar any stills is it's yore duty to tell it, so's it can be stopped."

"I'm afeared it would be a duty that would have to go undone," the old woman tells him. "I couldn't tell on my own people, Mr. Brading. You know I couldn't do that at all—even if I knowed whar any stills is, which I don't, because they're funder back in the mountains."

"You mention that you can't tell on yore own people," says Matt. "Shorely yore boys don't make whisky?"

Matt told me afterwards that he thought that old woman was a goin' to break his neck whether or not. She had meant mountain people, you know, and not her boys.

"Lemme tell you, Sir," she hollers out, "I've raised my boys by the Bible from the cradle up, and the' hain't one o' 'em but whar I'm proud of! I've raised 'em right, and they hate whisky as much as I do. Mr. Matt Brading, my pore husband was as good a man as ever walked these here hills, and he was killed by a drunken brute! Do you wonder why we hate whisky?"

She pushed her faded bonnet back and stood thar a tremblin' like a leaf in a earthquake, with her old eyes a shinin' and her wrinkled throat jest a throbbin'. You see, she'd give all her life to them sons o' hers. She loved 'em so much that she still tucked the covers around 'em in the wintertime.

Matt told me that he wanted to say somethin', but that it seemed like he couldn't think of nothin' to fit. Now, guess how he fixed it all up. Why, he axed her for half o' the totther huckleberry pie, that's how.

"It's sech a good pie, and so much like them I used to eat back home," he says, a turnin' red like a boy, "that I can't help axin' for it, even if it hain't good manners."

Granny Carter stopped lookin' mad, and give him the totther pie, which he eat, every bit, lock, stock, ramrod, barrel, and sights. And he knowed better'n to offer to pay for the pies. It'd a made her mad, and he knowed it.

**W**ELL, Matt Brading got to passin' Granny Carter's cabin every chanst he could git; and Granny Carter took to keepin' two fresh huckleberry pies on hands all the time, with their edges double scalloped, and lots o' pinky places whar the juice had soaked through. And, Sir, she soon got to thinkin' so well of him that she called him by the same pet name she called all four of her own boys, "Honey." Wunst he come mighty nigh a losin' his everlastin' smile a tryin' to tell her how much he appreciated her goodness to him. He told her that a man's palate was considerably less 'n a thousand miles from his heart.

So one time when he rode up she was a waitin' at the gate.

"Matt," she says, "I've been a thinkin' over what we was a talkin' on the first time you was here. I cain't seem to git it offen my mind that you said it was my duty to help the law. Matt, do you reckon it'd be exactly right?"

"Thar is no question about it," says Matt. "The trouble is that the mountain people would look down on you if they found it out."

"Nobody don't have to know it," says the old woman.

with the biggest kind o' sperit. "Matt, I'm a goin' to make my four boys quit work long enough to help you locate the still up thar in Pine Gap, that's whar I'm a goin' to do!"

"I wish to goodness you would!" says Matt. He was as proud as he could be about it. "I'll see that they git paid well for it. Whar can I find 'em?"

"Go up thar in the woods above the clearin', and holler for Buck. They're up thar a splittin' rails."

So Matt went. Buck answered, and the other three come also. They knowed Matt; so they wasn't strangers.

Matt told what the old woman had said about them a helpin' to locate the Pine Gap still. Buck and his brothers got up in the air right off at the mention of it.

"How long," says Buck, a slappin' his hat ag'inst his knee, "do you reckon we'd last if we was to be caught a turnin' somebody up for moonshinin'? Shorely you don't think we want to die yit awhile!"

"Not me!" says Lige, and Pete and Ike snorts like wild hogs in a corner. "Why," Lige declares, "if we was jest seen a goin' around with you, we'd be shot for it. You needn't to think that because them thar Pine Gap fellers hain't done no shootin' at you that it's because they hain't got no guns. They've all got guns, and they can all shoot a squirrel's eye out too. Besides, them fellers is as mean as b'iled-down gyar broth."

"I know the mountains," says Buck. "Lemme tell you, Matt, the best thing for you to do is to git another job and let the moonshiners alone. We hate the business,—we know it hain't right,—but we like you, Matt Brading, and we want you to live yit awhile."

Their mother come up jest then, with her bonnet a swingin' in one hand, and her gray hair a shinin' in the bright sunlight, and things changed consid'able.

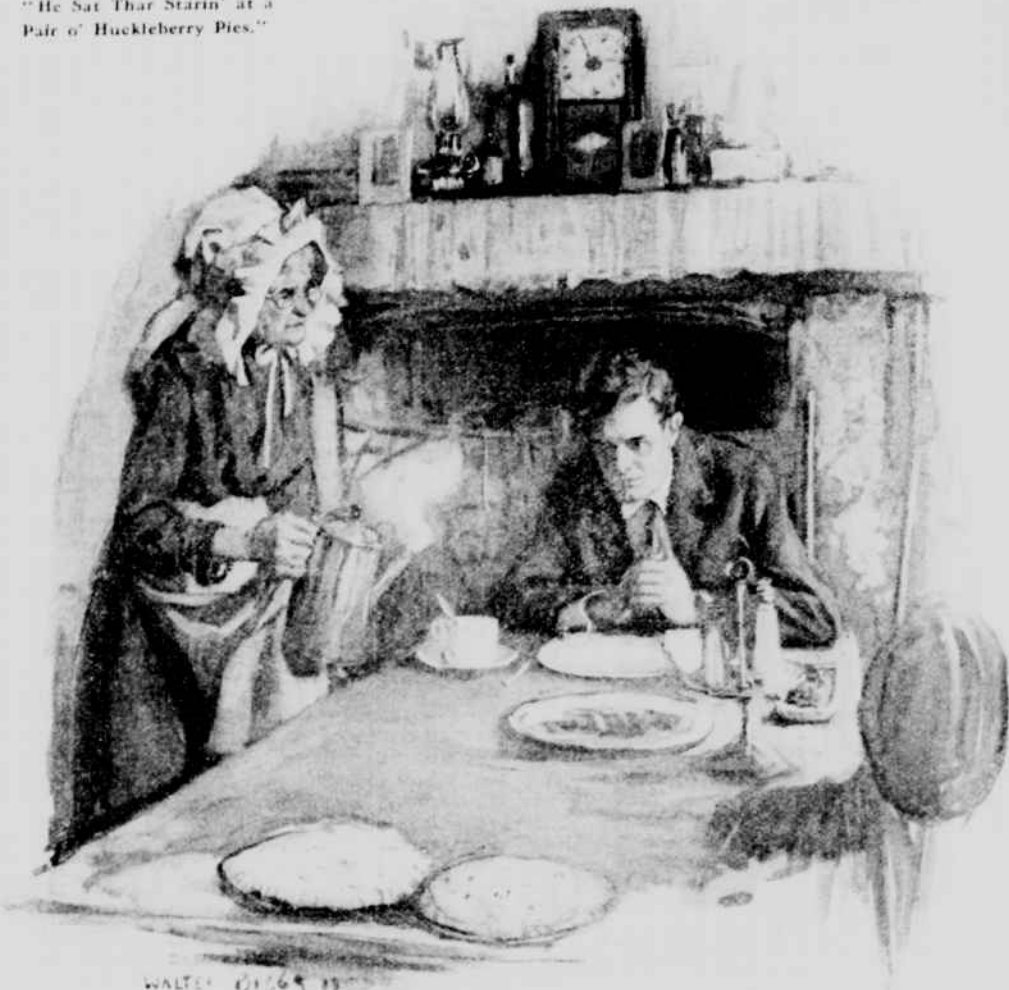
"Listen to me a minute, Boys," she says, like a Gen'l a givin' orders afore the battle. "Boys, yore pap was killed on account o' moonshine—when like thar was a little baby and couldn't walk. I got to him right after he was shot. I took his pore head into my lap, a settin' thar on the ground, and the blood went through my dress to my knees. Remember that blood, Boys! It hain't a mean thing to do, to turn up the Pine Gap moonshiners. I cain't help hatin' 'em, even, and I don't know for certain jest who they are. I want to live by the Bible; but God A'mighty knows I'm a human, and cain't help hatin'! Go with Matt, Boys. You can find a still whar he cain't. Stick to him too, even if you are all brought back without the breath of life in yore bodies!"

Well, the four looked a heap troubled. You see, it hain't a small thing to do, to turn up a still to the revenue, as the eyes of the mountaineer sees it.

"I'm o' the opinion we'd better keep it all quiet," says Buck. "We cain't be seen in yore comp'ny, Matt; but we can locate the still and then tell you. You come to the house day after tomorrow night, and we'll be a waitin' to tell you what we've found."

"Now," says Matt, "I want to take them fellers myself. I don't want to let the boss in on the deal, on account o' him always a bein' inclined to laugh at me. I

"He Sat Thar Starin' at a Pair o' Huckleberry Pies."



WALTER BIGG